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RECENT CHANGES IN THE THEOLOGY OF BAPTISTS

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From the apostolic time to the present there has never been complete agreement among Baptists (antipedobaptists), and no half-century has elapsed, it is probable, in the history of any particular antipedobaptist party without changes, more or less marked, in doctrine or in practice. Ebionites, Gnostics, and most of those that are commonly called "catholics" during the first two centuries, practiced believers' baptism; but they differed widely in their attitude toward the Scriptures, in their conceptions of the person of Christ, and in their ideas of God and his relation to the universe. Similar differences appear among mediaeval antipedobaptists. In the Reformation time soundly evangelical thinkers like Hubmaier, sweet-spirited mystics like Denck and Schwenckfeldt, unitarians like Haetzer, Bündnerlin, Kautz, and Servetus, pantheists like David Joris, communists like Wiedemann and Huter, and millenarians like Hoffmann and Mathis, all agreed in regarding infant baptism as without scriptural warrant and as a perversion of a Christian ordinance, and in denying the legitimacy of oaths, warfare, magistracy, capital punishment, and any sort of union of church and state. Some of the millennialists believed that the kingdom of Christ was about to be set up by the swords of true believers, who, when summoned thereunto by God's prophets, would smite the ungodly and become God's

instruments in ruling the earth in righteousness. All sixteenth-century antipedobaptists, so far as the writer has been able to ascertain, were anti-Augustinian (anti-Lutheran, anti-Calvinistic), agreeing with mediaeval antipedobaptists in insisting upon freedom of will, in laying stress upon good works (the imitation of Christ and the literal carrying-out in practice of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount), and in regarding Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone and his denial of freedom of will as immoral in their tendency.

The earliest English antipedobaptists (as distinguished from Anabaptists of the continental types) were aggressively Arminian (almost Socinian) in their theology, and while for some time, under Mennonite influence, they manifested an aversion toward oaths, magistracy, warfare, etc., their doctrine and practice with respect to these matters became gradually assimilated to those of their English pedobaptist dissenting contemporaries. During their earlier years (1609 onward) they seem to have conformed to the practice of the Mennonites and of English pedobaptist dissenters in being content with affusion as the act of baptism. Somewhere about 1641 they reached the conviction, as did their Calvinistic antipedobaptist brethren, that immersion is the only valid baptism. Soon after the latter change they came to regard the laying-on of hands as a Christian ordinance, and to disfellowship all who would not conform to this practice as well as all baptized believers who denied the universality of redemption through Christ. Restricted communion, in its most uncompromising form, was from the beginning characteristic of this antipedobaptist party.

During the later decades of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, General Baptist Arminianism degenerated into Socinianism, and many General Baptist churches that had already become weakened through the excessive application of discipline became extinct. Those that survived became for the most part avowedly unitarian. As a result of the evangelical revival under Wesley and Whitefield, the New Connection of General Baptists, moderately Arminian, distinctly trinitarian, and thoroughly missionary in spirit, was formed (in 1770) under the leadership of Dan Taylor. This body enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity and developed con-

siderable strength in missionary, educational, and literary directions. To this body belonged John Clifford, under whose leadership, a few years ago, it became amalgamated with the Particular Baptist body.

Those English antipedobaptists of the Calvinistic type who from 1633 onward separated themselves from a Congregationalist (Puritan) body in London, and who about 1641 came to insist upon immersion of believers as the only valid baptism, continued for some time in very close and friendly relations with their pedobaptist brethren, and in many cases practiced open communion. Mixed churches were common in their earlier history as well as in their present practice. During the eighteenth century, partly by way of reaction against Socinian error, which was sapping the religious life of all parties at the time, many Particular Baptist ministers and churches became hyper-Calvinistic (supralapsarian, antinomian), denying the obligation of Christians to preach the gospel to all men or to pray for the unconverted, on the ground that the fate of each individual was unalterably fixed by an eternal divine decree, and that human effort was not only needless, but almost sacrilegious. A few Particular Baptist ministers and churches, especially such as had come under the influence of the College at Bristol, held themselves aloof from the extremes of hyper-Calvinism. Under the influence of the Wesleyan revival, Andrew Fuller, who had been brought up in a hyper-Calvinistic community and had become a member of a church which had dismissed its pastor for insisting that the gospel ought to be preached to sinners, became convinced of the erroneousness of the teachings of his brethren. Though denied the privileges of scholastic training, by virtue of his unusual mental power and diligent application he succeeded in becoming well educated and was able to produce a body of moderately Calvinistic and thoroughly evangelical literature that revolutionized Baptist theology and made possible the wonderful progress of the denomination during the past century. Under his leadership, and that of William Carey and John Ryland, the modern Baptist missionary movement, whose success furnished the strongest possible argument against hyper-Calvinistic anti-effort teaching, was inaugurated. Hyper-Calvinistic Baptists still exist in small numbers in England. They have held themselves resolutely aloof from missionary and educational enterprise, and have abundantly demonstrated their

unfitness to do the work that Christianity was designed to accomplish and their unworthiness to be considered representatives of apostolic Christianity. The missionary movement led by Fuller and Carey brought English Particular Baptists into close touch with other evangelical denominations. Fuller, although to the end he insisted upon restricted communion, did not hesitate to appeal to all classes of evangelical Christians for funds for the support of the Baptist mission in India, and for the publication of Carey's translations of the Bible into oriental tongues.

Robert Robinson, the brilliant historian and hymnist, as pastor of the Cambridge church attracted the attention of wide circles outside of his own denomination. He gradually fell away from his Calvinistic principles into virtual Socinianism and became an advocate of open communion. Robert Hall, who had been educated at Bristol and in the University of Aberdeen, and who had early become imbued with the moderate Calvinism of Fuller and Ryland, came near following Robinson into the depths of rationalism, but was able to regain his footing and to become the most eloquent preacher of his time. As pastor of the Cambridge church he enjoyed a popularity among university people and other pedobaptists unequaled in the history of the Baptists. This circumstance, along with the example and the teachings of Robinson, his predecessor, had something to do, no doubt, with making him an ardent advocate of open communion. From the middle of the nineteenth century Particular Baptists were glad to welcome General Baptists into the Baptist Union, and a few years ago the two parties had become so far assimilated in theological opinion and in practice as to make the dropping of their distinctive names practicable and advisable.

The case of John Foster, one of the leading thinkers and literary men of the early part of the nineteenth century, is highly significant. Brought up as a Particular Baptist and educated at Bristol College, he later came under Socinian influence and for a time felt that he could work to better advantage among the General Baptists. Failing to find satisfaction or success in this direction, he resumed his relations with the Particular Baptists, and devoted his life to the production of moral and religious literature, which combined deep philosophical insight, intense moral earnestness, and moderate Calvinistic principles,

and which proved acceptable to evangelical Christian readers of all denominations. Foster's circumstances were thus highly favorable to the production in him of open communion sympathies. He became profoundly convinced that the eternal punishment of all who die without personal faith in Christ, especially of the heathen and those who in Christian lands are born and brought up amid adverse environments, was inconsistent with the justice and the benevolence of God, and he gave vigorous expression to his conviction in writings that influenced the minds of many Baptists and others.

That Foster should have been able to retain his fellowship in a Particular Baptist church and the high esteem of the great majority of Baptists throughout the world in his own generation and in subsequent times showed the breadth of the limits of Baptist toleration.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century a considerable proportion of the better-educated Baptist ministers of England, in sympathy with German liberal thought and with the liberal movement in the churches of England and Scotland, represented by Coleridge, Hare, Stanley, Maurice, Hampden, Thomas Erskine, J. McLeod Campbell, etc., and in antagonism to the Romanizing and Judaizing tendencies of High Churchmen, to the millennialism of the Plymouth Brethren (and some Low Churchmen), with its absurd combination of literalism and allegorism in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and its divisive and destructive tendencies, became the avowed advocates of the "New Theology," with its refusal to dogmatize regarding the ultimate destiny of those dying without a knowledge of the redemptive work of Christ, and in many cases gave expression to the "larger hope." Many came under the influence of the evolution philosophy with its disposition to obliterate the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, to deny to the biblical writers a special inspiration, to minify or repudiate the miraculous in biblical history, and to call in question the deity of Christ.

A few years before his death, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who drew his inspiration largely from the Puritan theology of the seventeenth century, and who for a generation had preached a Calvinistic theology with full recognition of the inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and with a fervor and an effectiveness never surpassed, became alarmed at the spread of liberal sentiments

in his denomination. In his monthly magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, he carried on for years an uncompromising warfare against the "Down Grade" movement, that seemed to him to be sapping the life of the churches and to be destined either to destroy them utterly or to precipitate them into unitarianism. His futile effort to induce the London Association and the Baptist Union to limit their fellowship to such as were willing to declare their belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, in the endlessness of the punishment of the impenitent dead, and in the absolute deity of Christ, led to his withdrawal from both these bodies. A large majority of his brethren resolutely refused to make the acceptance of definite dogmatic statements on matters of this kind a term of communion, many who were relatively conservative themselves declining to take the position that their own views of truth must be accepted by others on pain of the withdrawal of fellowship. The experience of English Baptists as a dissenting body suffering hardships for non-conformity has made them tolerant in the highest degree. Religious liberty has come to mean with many of them, not merely immunity from persecution at the hands of civil governments, but the right of every individual Christian freely to form and express his religious opinions without incurring the odium of church censure.

There is in England a small, but highly respectable, body of Baptists of the restricted-communion type, who maintain a theological seminary and engage successfully in missionary work. Many Welsh Baptists practice restricted communion without disfellowshipping those who differ from them in this particular. A number of pastors and churches followed Spurgeon in his withdrawal from the Union and continue their protest against the "Down Grade" movement. But the great majority of English Baptists are unalterably opposed to the requirement, for membership in churches, associations, or the Union, of any sort of creed subscription; while several of the most eminent of the leaders (as Clifford and Maclaren) have ministered to mixed churches, declining to make baptism a prerequisite to church membership; and a recent president of the Union, F. B. Meyer, was at the time of his election ministering to a pedobaptist church. It is probable that among English Baptist ministers who belong to the Baptist Union few hold to anything like a rigorous type

of Calvinism or feel any decided repugnance toward Arminianism, few feel shocked at the processes or results of the higher criticism, and few consider believers' baptism a prerequisite to participation in the Lord's Supper; and, while many believe in and teach the doctrine of the eternal punishment of all who die without faith in Christ, few would disfellowship a Christian for entertaining and encouraging in others the "larger hope."

Widely different has been the course of Baptist thought in America. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of Baptist ministers that could with due regard to the meaning of words be called well educated could be counted on one's fingers. Brown University had done less than might have been expected for the education of ministers. There is no evidence that those who administered its affairs were greatly concerned to fill its halls with young preachers, or that those who betook themselves to this seat of learning received much help along theological lines. Graduates of other universities that devoted themselves to the Baptist ministry were few and far between. Occasionally a man of unusual gifts and of independent means, like Richard Furman, supplied himself liberally with books and had leisure to become somewhat familiar with their contents. The great majority of American Baptists were Calvinistic, their doctrinal positions varying from that of Andrew Fuller to that of John Gill, many of the more illiterate going even beyond Gill in the harshness of their presentation of God's sovereignty and man's inability, and reaching a position hardly distinguishable from antinomianism. General (Arminian) Baptists still persisted in a feeble way, and Separate Baptists, with a tendency toward the Methodist type of evangelical Arminianism, had in many communities of the old Southwest refused to amalgamate with the Regulars; but these smaller bodies were for the most part far removed from the great currents of life and thought, and their ministers and members enjoyed little opportunity for culture.

During the early years of the nineteenth century Baptists devoted much of their energy to evangelistic work. Thousands were brought into the churches, and churches were multiplied. The preachers were for the most part illiterate, and the converts had no chance to become well instructed. The form of "free thought" current at the

time (infidelity of the Tom Paine type), so far from liberalizing popular Baptist thinking, had the effect of leading Baptists to look with horror upon any religious teaching that fell short of the strictest orthodoxy. The outbreak of unitarianism in New England about the beginning of the century caused the Baptists, even in New England, to be more than ever aggressive in their maintenance of rigorously supernaturalistic teaching. The Universalist movement, based upon the theory that Christ died for all men, and that all are therefore elected to salvation, caused some loss to Baptist churches, especially in New England, and Methodist influence led to the formation of the Free-Will Baptist denomination, which gained a considerable following in New England and in the maritime provinces of Canada. But competition with Universalism and with Methodism tended to strengthen rather than weaken the hold of Calvinism on the great mass of the Baptists. Arminian views were occasionally adopted by Baptist ministers during the early years of the nineteenth century, as during the later years of the eighteenth; but the denominational sentiment was strong enough to silence or convince the dissident, and to prevent the spread of their views.

The protest of Alexander Campbell against the rigorous Calvinism of the Baptists and their requirement of assent to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith by the churches as a condition of membership in associations, along with other features of his "reformation" that seemed to magnify Scripture authority, led to the defection of considerable numbers from the Baptist ranks in the old Southwest, but tended to harden those that remained faithful in their Calvinistic orthodoxy.

The inauguration of the Baptist foreign missionary movement and the formation of what came to be known as the Triennial Convention (1814) led to the strengthening and the consolidation of the moderate and intelligent element in the denomination, and was followed by remarkable activity, not only in foreign evangelization, but in home mission, educational, Sunday-school, and publication enterprise as well. The most intelligent and influential of the Baptist leaders of America thus became closely associated in Christian endeavor and stimulated each other in all good ways. There is no evidence of any important doctrinal differences among the members

of the Convention, and the advocate of open communion, future probation, or anything that fell short of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures would, no doubt, have found himself utterly discredited.

A large proportion of the uneducated pastors and churches looked with suspicion upon the agents of the Convention as practicing an unwarranted exploitation of the churches. The wonderful increase in Baptist members and churches that had taken place within their memory had been accomplished, not by the collection and expenditure of money through missionary societies, but by spirit-filled men who had preached the gospel without money and without price. The proposal to educate ministers was looked upon by Baptists of this type as an impertinent interference with God's call and equipment of preachers. They soon came to have a fanatical hatred of Sunday schools, prayer-meetings, missionary societies, temperance societies, tract societies, and human institutions in general, all of which seemed to them the devices of the devil for destroying the simplicity and the purity of the gospel. Within a few years the enterprises of the Convention were almost completely crowded out of Tennessee and Kentucky, and in several other states it long seemed doubtful whether the friends of the Great Commission, or those who were in the fetters of ignorance, prejudice, and avarice, would triumph. The opponents of missionary and educational enterprise became more and more extreme in their hyper-Calvinism by reason of their opposition, and many of them went to the extreme of fatalism and antinomianism. This type of Baptist life and thought has successfully maintained its numbers and has at present over a hundred thousand adherents; but the relative growth of missionary Baptists has been so great as to leave their opponents in the position of being an almost negligible quantity.

The establishment of Baptist colleges and theological seminaries and of a denominational press, together with the rapid development of educational facilities of a general kind throughout the entire country, resulted by the middle of the nineteenth century in multiplying the number of well-educated ministers and in greatly raising the intellectual standard of the denomination. Scholars like Thomas J. Conant, Horatio B. Hackett, Asahel C. Kendrick, Ezekiel G. Robinson, and Alvah Hovey, with a score of only slightly

lesser lights, at the North, and like Boyce, Broadus, Manley, Williams, Brantly, and Winkler, in the South, most of whom had been trained in the best non-Baptist institutions and several of whom had studied in the universities of Germany, gave a broader outlook to the Baptist ministry of the country than it had ever known.

Ezekiel G. Robinson, for many years president of the Rochester Theological Seminary, and a thinker of boldness and acumen, discouraged in his students the acceptance of traditional views simply because they had been handed down from past generations, and no doubt led some of the less conservatively disposed among his students to trust more in human reason than was commonly thought wholesome. He was less aggressive than many of his brethren in his maintenance of distinctive Baptist principles, and while he did not advocate open communion, his failure to stress restricted communion is thought to have influenced some minds in favor of the laxer doctrine and practice.

George W. Northrup, as professor of church history in the Rochester Theological Seminary and as president of the institution that has been perpetuated in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, was from the beginning of his career as a teacher distinctly independent in relation to current Baptist orthodoxy. During his later years he published a series of articles in which he departed widely from the type of Calvinistic doctrine which American Baptists had long generally accepted, and he seems to have assumed an attitude of toleration toward biblical criticism of the more radical type. Augustus H. Strong, as president of Rochester Theological Seminary and professor of systematic theology, abandoned several years ago his earlier defense of the inerrancy of the Scriptures and became distinctly hospitable toward the "higher criticism." He also made an earnest effort to reach a conception of the human will that involves more of freedom than Calvinism allows and less than that claimed by Arminianism. Under the influence of current Lutheran theology, with its Neoplatonic, Mystical, semi-pantheistic elements, he early adopted essentially Eutychian views of the relation of the divine and the human in the person of Christ (as in his acceptance of the doctrine of the communication of all divine attributes to the humanity of Christ, involving the virtual absorption of the finite human by the infinite

divine and in his adoption of the Alexandrian denial of a human will in Christ). His later pronouncement in favor of monism was the further carrying-out, under the influence of recent German thought, of the semi-pantheistic teaching already accepted. When, in response to criticism, he restated his position as "ethical monism," the difference between the resultant position and his earlier was hardly appreciable. Closely connected with this "monistic" phase of his theological thought is his frank acceptance of the evolution philosophy and his effort to apply this to theology without too much sacrifice of the supernatural in creation, the origin of man's moral and religious nature, the fall, redemption, and revelation. While only a few of his students and the readers of his books, it is probable, have fully realized the historical relations and the bearings of his earlier Eutychian and his later monistic views, his departure from strict Calvinistic teaching, his liberal attitude in relation to the Scriptures, and his acceptance of the evolution philosophy could hardly fail to exert a widespread influence against Baptist conservatism of the older type.

The influence exerted upon Baptist thought by Conant, Hackett, and Kendrick, the eminent linguists and biblical scholars, is not so easy to estimate. Thoroughly familiar themselves with German biblical criticism, so far as it had developed in their time, and admirers and emulators of German scholarship, they yet maintained relatively conservative views respecting the authority and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and gave no indication of any tendency to eliminate or to minimize the supernatural element in biblical history. By encouraging their students to become masters of German exegetical literature, to carry on exhaustive studies after the manner of the Germans, and when possible to study in the German universities, they greatly promoted learning among Baptists, and incidentally brought many young men under liberalizing influences.

Substantially the same thing may be said respecting John A. Broadus, who was equally eminent as a biblical scholar, and possessed a remarkably strong personality. As preacher and teacher he wielded an almost unmeasured influence throughout the South, and far beyond. He, too, promoted the study of German exegetical works and encouraged his best students to pursue graduate courses of study in German universities. His own religious experience was so pro-

found and his faith in the authority of the Scriptures so well grounded that he regarded with equanimity the thorough testing that the books of the Bible were undergoing and had no misgivings as to the ultimate result. His tolerance toward biblical criticism even of a somewhat radical type was manifest in his admiration and friendship for Crawford H. Toy, who, years before the public criticism of some of his radical utterances had made his position in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary untenable, had reached conclusions, as his intimate friends well knew, completely out of harmony with the views of his constituents. It can hardly be doubted that Dr. Toy's years of active service as professor in the seminary influenced many minds in favor of more liberal views of the Bible. That few followed him in his extreme positions was due to the deeply spiritual and practical influence of Broadus and others, and to the uncompromising conservatism of the denominational press and of the Southern Baptists in general. The dismissal of Dr. Toy had the effect, no doubt, of discrediting in the eyes of many of his former students the critical methods that were responsible for it, and of putting the seminary itself more than ever on its guard against anything that could be construed into disloyalty toward the Scriptures.

The controversy that arose a few years ago because of certain conclusions regarding Baptist history reached and promulgated by William H. Whitsitt, then president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and professor of church history, to the effect that English antipedobaptists did not reach the conviction until about 1641 that immersion is the exclusively valid form of baptism, and that earlier antipedobaptists regarded the mode of applying water as a matter of indifference, led many graduates of the seminary, and others who sympathized with Dr. Whitsitt, to demand for the seminary faculty, and for all, freedom to investigate and freedom to publish the results of research, in opposition to those who regarded Dr. Whitsitt as disloyal to the denomination because of his willingness to proclaim as historical discoveries alleged facts that seemed to them highly discreditable to the Baptists and destructive of denominational prestige. The defense of Dr. Whitsitt was rendered all the more difficult by the fact that he had first published his alleged discoveries in editorial articles written "from a pedobaptist point of view" in an undenomi-

national journal, and that, in the interest of his reputation as a discoverer, he had avowed the authorship of the objectionable articles. Yet many who regarded the publication of the articles as a mistake and the gratuitous avowal of their authorship as unwise felt themselves compelled to do everything possible to prevent the triumph of the conservatives and the ultra-conservatives in his exclusion from the seminary. The *Baptist Argus*, that was founded about the beginning of the controversy to counteract the influence of the *Western Recorder* that led the opposition to Dr. Whitsitt and stood for a more rigorous type of Baptist conservatism than the friends of Dr. Whitsitt, including a majority of the members of the seminary faculty, approved, has become in a sense the organ of the seminary, and has exercised a profound influence in favor of freedom of thought and of utterance, especially among the Baptists of the Southeast. Its influence was paramount in the formation of the General Convention of Baptists of North America (St. Louis, 1905), and in bringing about the Baptist World Congress (London, 1905), both of which meetings effected permanent organization for the promotion of brotherhood and co-operation among Baptists. The Southeastern Baptist press stands for the most part upon the same platform as the *Baptist Argus* and the seminary, and the Southern Baptist Convention, a majority of whose attending members are always from the Southeast, is swayed by the same moderately conservative spirit.

The influence of Alvah Hovey, of the Newton Theological Institution, as professor and president, was during his long career strong, sane, and moderately conservative. Though surrounded by pervasive liberalizing influences, he maintained to a remarkable degree the even tenor of his way. Yet the introduction into the faculty during the later years of his administration of men of a somewhat liberal type would seem to indicate that he was not aggressively hostile to the practice of a reverent criticism of the biblical books, and his definition of inspiration does not carry with it evidence of conviction on his part of the absolute inerrancy of Scripture.

The Hamilton Theological Seminary (the theological department of Colgate University) was long regarded as a bulwark of Baptist orthodoxy and, like the institutions at Rochester and Newton Center, has furnished to the world a host of able and consecrated

missionaries, college presidents, professors, and pastors. A few years ago Nathanael Schmidt, a brilliant Semitic scholar, retired from the faculty because of his application of the "higher criticism" to the Old Testament books, with somewhat destructive results. Professor Schmidt immediately accepted the chair of Semitic languages in Cornell University and became a member of the Ithaca Baptist church. The recent publication of his *The Prophet of Nazareth*, which embodies the most extreme phase of New Testament destructive criticism, probably had something to do with his withdrawal from the church and the denomination. Yet William N. Clarke, professor of systematic theology in the seminary, who has given world-wide fame to the institution by writings that combine deep spirituality and devoutness with denial of the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, the expression of the "larger hope" respecting those who have died without personal faith in Christ, and many other departures from what is commonly regarded as Baptist orthodoxy, has retained in the highest measure the confidence and respect of his colleagues and of multitudes of other Baptists. The example of a man who can hold to such views without loss of piety or zeal, and whose Christian character no one would dare call in question, has had a mighty influence in encouraging young men to seek to realize in themselves a like gracious combination of sanctified sweetness and light with liberal sentiments.

The influence of the late President William Rainey Harper in popularizing more liberal views of the Bible, and encouraging throughout wide circles a spirit of freedom of thought and utterance, is too much in evidence to require elaborate exposition. Through his correspondence courses in Hebrew; through his journals for the promotion of biblical and Semitic studies; through his activity in the founding and building-up of the University of Chicago, with its large opportunities for research and the publication of the results of research in every department; through the incorporation of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary with the university as its divinity school; through the publication of the *American Journal of Theology*, edited by the faculty of the Divinity School on the most liberal undenominational and international basis; through the transformation of an earlier more popular monthly into the *Biblical World*, with greatly

increased circulation and influence; through the publication of inductive Sunday-school lessons and lessons for Bible clubs, and the systematic efforts put forth to secure the effective use of these publications; through the organization of international and interdenominational societies for the promotion of biblical studies (these somewhat indefinite specifications are barely suggestive of the influences set at work by this wonderful educationist)—he influenced Baptist life and thought to an incalculable extent. Add to these his own somewhat voluminous writings and his widespread personal influence through his activity as teacher, through his addresses delivered on public occasions all over the country, and through the prestige that came from his successful leadership in the establishment of a great university, and it will scarcely be denied by anyone that we have in his person an elemental force of the first magnitude for the liberalizing the Baptist denomination.

Some of the Eastern Baptist universities (notably Brown) have been for some time conducted on almost as liberal a basis as the University of Chicago, and are exerting, in a less conspicuous way, a like influence on Baptist thought and life. Many Baptist students have been educated in undenominational universities and seminaries noted for their liberal thought (as Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin, Union Theological Seminary, etc.), and have imbibed more or less of the spirit of these institutions.

Many even of the smaller Baptist universities and colleges, even those that are being conducted under highly conservative auspices, have felt compelled to look for teachers of natural science and specialists in other departments among the graduates of the larger universities in which liberal ideas prevail.

Textbooks, popular, scientific, and philosophical literature, much general literature, much periodical literature (including the daily press), have come to be permeated with modes of thought antagonistic to the spirit of Baptist conservatism.

The Baptist Congress, organized twenty-four years ago by a small group of Baptists of the more liberal type for the purpose of promoting freedom of discussion, while it has never sought recognition as a denominational institution, has furnished occasion for the utterance

of radical opinions in every department of religious thought distasteful to the great majority of Baptists. It has been the policy of the management of the Congress to secure in the discussion of each topic the presentation of conservative and liberal views by representative men, and thus to add zest to its sessions and attract readers to its annual reports. There can be no question that many Baptist ministers inclined to liberal views have been led by the Congress to commit themselves publicly to advanced positions and to become aggressively liberal, who might otherwise have kept their skepticism in abeyance and have finally overcome it.

Baptist orthodoxy is being vigorously assailed in another direction by an aggressive premillennialism, whose advocates maintain uncompromisingly the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and regard with abhorrence the application of the "higher criticism" to the books of the Bible as being prompted by satanic influence. Institutions in which such criticism is practiced and encouraged they look upon as Satan's chief instrumentalities for counteracting the influence of true Christianity. They assume a distinctly hostile attitude toward modern science and philosophy, and do not for the most part encourage those who are under their influence to pursue courses of study in universities and theological seminaries wherein modes of thought hostile to their conceptions of religion and of the Bible are inculcated. They show, on the other hand, a marked preference for Bible schools or training-schools, from which modern modes of thought are, as far as possible, excluded, and in which attention is given to the inculcation of their method of Scripture interpretation and the securing of a practical knowledge of the English Bible, with skill in using its contents for evangelistic purposes and for the defense of the millennial system. A favorite and effective method of propagandism is the holding of Bible conferences in the great religious centers, especially where a member of the party is in a position of influence. At these conferences the chief Baptist millennialists of the country gather and with leading millennialists of other denominations employ the intensive method for impressing their views on all who attend. The ties that bind Baptist premillennialists to premillennialists of other denominations are in many cases much closer than those that bind them to non-millennialist Baptists, and many of the former develop

strong open-communion sentiments. This type of thought has a tendency, it would seem, to produce indifference toward the organized work of the denomination, and to stimulate interest in undenominational evangelism, as represented in the institutions founded by Mr. Moody and the China Inland Mission. This type of evangelistic millennialism came into the Baptist denomination from the influence of the Plymouth Brethren, through evangelists like Henry Varley and Dwight L. Moody. Among Baptists who have been active in propagating it the most influential was Dr. A. J. Gordon, whose university and theological training, rich personality, popularity as preacher and lecturer, literary skill and industry in bringing his views to bear upon the reading public, and organizing ability in building up a training-school and in directing the work of many evangelists, gave to him a foremost place among the religious influences of his time. Dr. A. T. Pierson, a baptized believer, but not a member of a Baptist church, has much in common with Gordon, and is still exerting a widespread influence in favor of evangelistic millennialism, through the press, the pulpit, and the lecture platform. Perhaps the most eminent living Baptist representative of this type of religious thought and work in America is A. C. Dixon, pastor of the Ruggles Street Church, Boston, who as preacher, evangelist, and participant in Bible conferences has become widely known and highly influential throughout America and also in Great Britain. He is said to devote little attention to any books but the Bible, and to wish to be known as in the strictest sense a man of one book.¹ On the same platform in all important particulars stand Len G. Broughton, of Atlanta, and W. B. Riley, of Minneapolis. These, with many other premillennialists of less eminence, are exerting a strong influence in favor of a millennialistic type of evangelism, with its rigorous views of Scripture, its intense earnestness, and its magnifying of the work of the Holy Spirit, of salvation by grace, and of atonement through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Many conservative Baptists have no doubt been driven by fear of the destruction of

¹ Since the above sentences were written, Dr. Dixon has accepted a call to the pastorate of the Moody church in Chicago, and the denominational weeklies are questioning the consistency of his profession of loyalty to the denomination and his identification of himself with a non-Baptist organization.

scriptural authority and of evangelical religion through the spread of rationalism to seek refuge in this intensely anti-rationalistic mode of thought, which claims to make the Scriptures absolutely supreme and to accept the Holy Spirit as sole interpreter and guide.

But it would be a colossal mistake for ultra-liberals to conclude that victory has been achieved and that the days of Baptist orthodoxy are numbered, or for the premillennialist brethren to conclude that the future is theirs. There is no occasion for undue alarm on the part of conservative Baptists, who are still in a vast majority and who still control the working forces of the denomination. With perhaps two exceptions, all of our theological seminaries wish to be regarded as adherents to the faith for which Baptists in the past have earnestly contended. Nathan E. Wood, the present president of the Newton Theological Institution, having in mind the denomination at large, but no doubt expressing his own convictions and those of his colleagues recently wrote:

No one of the great Christian doctrines which we held at the beginning of the century [the nineteenth] has been abandoned at the close of it. Each one has gained a richer content of meaning, a wider application, and a larger appreciation. The century has wonderfully illustrated the fact "that new light is continually springing out of God's word." Baptists have never in all their history had such a point of vantage as at the beginning of the new century for carrying the gospel into all the world and so glorifying their ascended Lord.²

Yet he elsewhere speaks of the theory of verbal inspiration universally held by Baptists at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and still held explicitly or implicitly by fully nine-tenths of the Baptists of America, as "crass" and as having barred "the way against any inquiry into the grounds of authority."

Baptists [he says] now appear to accept the authority of the Scriptures chiefly because of the Christian consciousness of their eternal fitness to be the words of God. . . . The real and ultimate grounds of acceptance are the affirmations of Christian consciousness. The verbal theory itself has been so modified as to allow for the free play of the human element in inspired utterance.

He regards "historical criticism" as a means of determining "the ultimate grounds of the authority of the Scriptures" as "distinctly a failure," being no more effective than water would be as a test

² In *A Century of Baptist Achievement*, edited by the writer (Philadelphia, 1901), art. "Movements in Baptist Theology."

of gold in ore. He seemingly accepts the theory of evolution in the realm of biology, and admits that many new questions regarding "the origin of evil; of race-sin as well as individual sin; of race-penalties as well as individual penalties; of how far the union of Christ with the race lifted both kinds of penalty; to what extent incarnation marks Christ to be in every man and every man in him," etc., have been raised thereby, some of which, he thinks, are still unsolved; yet he earnestly repudiates the universalistic conclusions that some have drawn from evolution premises, and regards missionary enterprise as more than ever incumbent upon Christians. It is probable that some members of the Newton faculty are more conservative and some more liberal than President Wood; but it seems certain that the institution as a whole, while it stands upon a more liberal platform than in earlier days, still earnestly maintains that the Scriptures are a divine revelation, and that the religion of Christ is of supreme importance to all men.

Reference has already been made to the somewhat advanced teachings of W. N. Clarke, of the Theological Seminary of Colgate University. It is not to be supposed that the president of the university or all the members of the divinity faculty accept all his teachings. They believe in the man as an earnest Christian, respect him for his power as a teacher and his literary gifts, and would not feel justified in demanding his withdrawal; but it is probable that they disapprove of much that he has written. Few institutions take a deeper interest in foreign missions, or send a larger proportion of their graduates to the foreign field, than Colgate.

While the president of the Rochester Theological Seminary has in some respects departed from the older orthodoxy, and while some other members of the Rochester faculty have manifested liberal tendencies in other directions, the institution still wishes to be regarded as holding fast to the great truths for which our fathers contended, and is endeavoring, with greatly increased resources, to maintain its place as a potent agency for the promotion of Christ's cause. In a recent report to the board of trustees President Strong thus expresses his conception of the present attitude of the institution:

Yet we have not apostatized from the faith, nor have we ceased to teach the unity and sufficiency of Scripture, righteousness as the fundamental attribute of

God, the fall of man and original sin, the deity, pre-existence, virgin-birth and physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his omnipresence in nature, in history, and in the hearts of his people, the regenerating work of his Holy Spirit, and his future second coming to judge the world and to reward the faithful. I believe that the teaching of these truths has won for us the confidence of the churches and the favor of God. Let others teach as they will; we propose to walk in the old paths and to hand down to our successors the old gospel.

The venerable Henry G. Weston, president of the Crozer Theological Seminary, stands today on virtually the same platform that he has stood upon for the past fifty years, and is still exerting a profound and widespread influence in favor of conservative Baptist thought. While some of his colleagues have manifested a more liberal spirit, Crozer may safely be numbered among the positive forces for the conservation of Baptist orthodoxy.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, with the largest constituency of any of our institutions, has carefully avoided any expression of sympathy with the "New Theology" or destructive biblical criticism. President Mullins, on behalf of the faculty, has recently given the strongest possible assurance that the moderately conservative attitude of the institution will be maintained, and that the institution will continue to send out large numbers of preachers who accept without qualification the authority of the Scriptures, and who believe that the gospel of Christ, and that alone, is the power of God unto salvation.

Decidedly conservative is the Baylor Theological Seminary, of Waco, Tex., where B. H. Carroll, mighty in the Scriptures, and mighty in his power to impress and enforce the most rigorous orthodoxy and yet remarkably tolerant toward those who honestly differ with him in their theological views, and Calvin Goodspeed, who, with rare sweetness of spirit and with rare logical acumen, teaches a thoroughly orthodox theology and repels what he conceives to be erroneous innovations, constitute a tower of strength for accepted Baptist doctrine and practice. The new theological seminary in Kansas City is also working along distinctly conservative lines.

It is easy to exaggerate the extent to which the Divinity School of the University of Chicago is given over to the promulgation of ultra-liberal views. From the beginning several members of the faculty have represented conservatism of the most thoroughgoing type.

So far as the writer can judge, the majority of the faculty as at present constituted are earnest and devout representatives of the same type of thought that characterizes the more liberal members of the Rochester, Newton, and Colgate faculties. The following extract from a recent editorial in the *Biblical World* probably represents fairly their attitude toward the Bible and revealed religion:

It is our conviction that in the books which have for centuries been accepted as the Bible of the Christian church there is contained a revelation of religious truth which the world still needs and will never cease to need. We believe that it is good for men everywhere that these books should be read and studied—by scholars, with scholarly thoroughness and exhaustiveness; by Christian preachers, in reverent search for the message which they shall give to the people; by the student of good literature, for their literary beauty, their elevated and elevating thought; by busy men and women, for comfort, inspiration, and spur to right action; by the young, that they may set out upon their careers with high ideals and fixed purpose to live strongly and nobly; by the children, that they may early come under the charm of the truth-suggesting stories which these books contain, and the elevating atmosphere in which they move. . . . That solid results for theology and life are to be gained by historical study, and only thus, is regarded as established beyond the necessity for further debate. What remains to be done is faithfully and patiently to prosecute such study, and to promote it by the publication of its reasonably assured results. . . . They expect some changes, both in the opinions of scholars and in the opinions of thoughtful men and women generally. They anticipate that the children of the next generation will begin life with conceptions of some matters pertaining to religion and the Bible somewhat different from those with which they themselves began. They welcome all progress that comes through larger knowledge. It is not for them to determine beforehand what is to be learned, and what direction progress is to take. Nor will they call all change progress. The old that is true—and they are persuaded that the heart of the old is true—they will seek to defend and conserve with all fidelity. They hold no brief for any new view. But they will seek ever to keep their faces to the light, in the confidence that all truth is good, the newly found equally with the long familiar.

The strongest and most pervasive conservative influence among the Baptists of America at the present time is unquestionably the denominational press. Of the scores of weekly journals that go into hundreds of thousands of Baptist homes hardly half a dozen, it is probable, show any inclination on the part of their editors toward liberal views regarding the Bible and its teachings. It is probable that no Baptist newspaper that should become the advocate of ultra-liberal views could find a constituency large enough to support it.

The great mass of Baptist people, even in the States that have come most under the influence of the new theology, are conservative, and they demand conservatism in the papers they support. The positive influence of denominational papers in keeping conservative teaching constantly before the minds of the people, and their negative influence in deterring those who have come more or less under the sway of liberal modes of thought from rash and radical utterance, can hardly be overestimated.

It is probable that even in the New England and Middle States not one Baptist member in ten is conscious of any important change in theology or departure from the old Baptist orthodoxy. In the western and southeastern States probably not one Baptist in twenty has been seriously affected by the "New Theology." In the great Southwest, where Baptists abound and are exceedingly aggressive, one in a hundred would, it is thought, be a liberal estimate of those who have to any appreciable degree yielded to innovating influences.

Mention should be made of the influence in favor of conservative Baptist thought still being exerted by several eminent Baptists not now actively engaged in theological instruction. Howard Osgood, formerly a member of the faculty of the Rochester Theological Seminary, and generally recognized as one of the foremost Old Testament scholars in America, has published much in defense of the older views regarding the Old Testament books, and is no doubt devoting his leisure to more elaborate writings against the alleged results of the "higher criticism." Henry E. Robins is enriching Baptist literature with ethical and apologetical works embodying conservative Baptist teaching. William C. Wilkinson, the greatest writer that the denomination has ever possessed, has published much in defense of Baptist conservatism, and has just completed what will probably be accepted by evangelical Christians as by far the best life of Christ ever written, and which is no doubt his theological masterpiece. William Ashmore, the veteran missionary; Jesse B. Thomas, who recently retired because of advancing age from the Newton faculty; and Galusha Anderson, who for the same reason recently discontinued his work in the Divinity school of the University of Chicago, are all earnestly contending for the faith of our fathers and influencing many minds.

It has been made abundantly evident that Baptists and their antipedobaptist predecessors have never been completely homogeneous in their modes of thought or in their doctrinal beliefs. Considering the mental idiosyncrasies of individual Christians and of different Christian communities, and the influence that current philosophical and scientific thought inevitably exercises upon theological thinking, absolute uniformity, persisting from generation to generation, can hardly be expected. That without a creed recognized as authoritative and binding, without ecclesiastical courts for the enforcement of uniformity in doctrine and practice on churches and ministers, and with the completest independence of individual Baptist churches, there is as much in common as there is among five million Baptists of America, is one of the marvels of church history. To one who is familiar with the past history of Christianity and that of the Baptist denomination there is nothing in the facts of the immediate past and the present that should cause alarm. "Things are getting better," to use J. B. Gambrell's expressive phrase, and not worse. With Hubmaier, the great antipedobaptist of the sixteenth century, we may console ourselves with the assurance that "the truth is immortal." Nothing that is vital in historical Christianity will or can perish or cease to be effective. Gold is not destroyed by passing through the crucible, but rather refined. If the documents that Christians regard as sacred and authoritative are really the expression and embodiment of God's truth for the guidance of mankind in spiritual things, they will only be made more effective, as they have been made in the past, by criticism, whether it is hostile or friendly. Baptists need fear to lose nothing of their inheritance that is valuable, if they prove faithful in their use and administration of all that has been committed to them. As a matter of fact, they never possessed so many advantages and never encountered so few obstacles to progress as today. Individuals, institutions, and communities may for a time fall into error and disturb the harmony of the body; but the denomination as a whole is too well grounded in the truth, and too mighty in numbers, in institutions, and in denominational spirit, to be disadvantageously affected by currents of thought that may seem adverse.